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I thought, ornithologists of some authority, but got no satisfactory answers. One even wrote to me that perhaps it was dew formed on the eggs. Just think of dew, at midday, on the sand blazing under a semi-tropical sun, with not a particle of shade except when the sky is overcast! Cannot any of your readers throw some light on the subject?

The young are just the color of the sand. I have followed their trails through the sand for fifty or a hundred yards and found the little downy fellows with not a feather on them. How they escape the foxes, raccoons, and opossums, besides the numerous Hawks, is more than I can tell.

Yours respectfully,

GIDEON MABBETT.

Rodney, Mississippi.

## NOTES AND NEWS.

WILLIAM KITCHEN PARKER, F. R. S., an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union died suddenly July 3, 1890, at Cardiff, Wales, at the age of 67 years. He was born at Dogsthorpe, near Peterborough. While still a youth he was apprenticed to a chemist. Later he studied medicine, settling at Pimlico in 1849. In natural history he was at first deeply interested in botany, and later on in the study of the Foraminiferæ, to which his earlier papers relate. In 1865 he began the publication of a series of valuable papers on the morphology of the skull in Vertebrates, beginning with the Ostrich, and including the Parrot, the Common Fowl, and representatives of the principal types of Vertebrates, from mammals to fishes. In 1868 he brought out his well-known wonderful, 'Monograph on the Structure and Development of the Shoulder-girdle and Sternum in the Vertebrata.' He was also the author of the article on the Anatomy of Birds in the last edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' His contributions to ornithology are mainly anatomical, and include among others the following: 'On the Osteology of *Balaeniceps rex*', 1860-62; On the Osteology of the Genera *Pterocles*, *Syrrhaptes*, *Hemipodius*, and *Tinamus*', 1862; 'On the Systematic Position of the Crested Screamer (*Palamedea chavaria*)', 1863-64; 'On the Skeleton of the *Archæopteryx* and on the relation of the Bird to the Reptile,' 1864; 'On the Osteology of the Kagu (*Rhinochetus jubatus*)', 1864; 'On the Structure and Development of the Skull in the Ostrich Tribe,' 1866; 'On the Osteology of Gallinaceous Birds and Tinamous,' 1866; 'On Ægithognathous Birds,' 1873-76; 'On the Development of the Wing in the Common Fowl,' 1888; 'On the Systematic Position of the Swifts,' 1889. In 1877 he summarized the results of his previous studies in a volume on 'The Morphology of the Skull.' He also left unpublished memoirs on the Morphology of the Anatidæ and the Alcidæ. In 1874 he was appointed Hunterian Professor of Comparative Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1865, and for a time was Pres-

ident of the Royal Microscopical Society. His skill as a draughtsman gave him great advantage in the illustration of his papers, which have contributed so eminently to the embryology and the morphological relations of the Vertebrata. He is said to have been an enthusiastic and entertaining lecturer; as a man, large-hearted, liberal-minded and modest; as a naturalist, philosophic to a high degree, and a devoted searcher after truth for its own sake. "Deprived of the advantages of a University education, and without any of those aids to learning which are afforded by the Science Schools of the present day, he owed all the knowledge which he acquired to an intense love of Nature prompting and developing a taste for original research, which, in spite of many obstacles, he assiduously cultivated to the last. Few men probably have commenced a scientific career under greater difficulties than he must have experienced; but his indomitable energy and perseverance, combined with natural talent, eventually placed him in the foremost rank of modern scientists."

THE EIGHTH CONGRESS of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held in Washington, D.C., beginning Tuesday, November 18, 1890. A large attendance of both Active and Associate Members is anticipated. Aside from the reports of Standing Committees and the usual business routine, important amendments to the By Laws will come up for consideration, and reports from Special Committees, including the Report of the Committee to devise and recommend a uniform system for measurements of birds. A good display of photographs of birds in life, including stereopticon illustrations, may be expected, if members will cordially co-operate with the Committee having the matter specially in charge. (See *Auk*, VII, p. 100.) Members, both Active and Associate, are requested to send the titles of papers they propose to present at the meeting to the Secretary, Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn., some days in advance of the meeting, so that a programme of papers may be prepared. The utility of such a programme was well demonstrated at the last Congress, but its preparation will depend upon the necessary co-operation of members in promptly forwarding the titles of their papers.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS will be held at Budapest in May, 1891, the session beginning at Whitsuntide. The Hungarian Committee of the Congress has already issued a circular of information, inviting each Ornithological Society throughout the world to send a representative delegate, and each specialist in ornithology to be present personally. The Hungarian Committee, with their headquarters at the Hungarian National Museum, has already begun preparations for the reception of the Congress, under the direction of four Sub-Committees, as follows: I. Scientific Committee: President, Mr. Otto Hernian, M. P.; Secretary, Dr. Julius Madarász. II. Economic and Financial Committee: President, Mr. Fridor Máday. III. Committee of Correspondence: President, Mr. John Xántus. IV. Exhibitions Committee: (a) for the exhibition of mounted skins, President, Mr. John Frivaldszky, Curator of the Zoölogical Section of the Hungarian National Museum; (b) for the exhibition of living birds, President, Mr. Charles Serák, Director of the Zoölogical Gardens.

The exhibition will embrace the full Hungarian *Ornis* as far as known up to the day of opening. Abnormalities and interesting aberrations

will be grouped separately, as a special part of the exhibition. The results of the combined observations on bird migration made during the spring of 1890 will be graphically represented, and illustrated with specimens of the birds to which they relate. The observations made fall into two groups: (1) Those made along a diagonal line between the mouth of the River Drau and Lake Ferto, from the middle of February to the middle of May. (2) The combined observations of fifteen ornithologists, made at their respective places of residence during the same period. During the sitting of the Congress several excursions will be made to such parts of the country as present features of special ornithological interest. Count Béla Széchényi proposes a general fowl and bird shooting excursion on Lake Ferto, and another for Bustard shooting in the same vicinity.

The President of the Hungarian Committee is his Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Count Andrew Bethlen. The Vice-Presidents are Mr. Em. Szalay, Counsellor of the Ministry of Public Instruction; Prof. Géza Entz, of the Polytechnic High School; and Mr. Charles Kammermeyer, the Mayor of Budapest. The Secretary is Mr. Stephen Chernel.

A detailed programme of the proceedings at the Congress will soon be arranged, giving further information.

THE REAL character of the European House Sparrow is at last attracting, at least in some quarters, the attention of legislators. While the bird has for some time been made an outlaw by legislative action in several of the States, and the offering of bounties for their wholesale destruction has been agitated in others, the Massachusetts Legislature, after an extended discussion of the matter, has passed an act entitled 'An act providing for the extermination of the English Sparrow in the Commonwealth.' The act provides as follows:

"*Sect. 1.* In all cities of the Commonwealth the officers having charge of the public buildings, and in all towns thereof such officers as the selectmen shall designate and appoint, shall take and enforce such reasonable means and use such appliances as in their judgement may be effective for the extermination of the English Sparrow therein; but in so doing poisons shall not be used.

"*Sect. 2.* Any person who shall wilfully resist the persons in any city or town charged with the execution of the provisions of this act, while engaged therein, or who shall knowingly interfere with the means used by them for said purpose, to render the same less effective, shall be punished by fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars for each such offense.

"*Sect. 3.* Nothing in this act shall be so construed as to allow an officer to enter on private property without consent of the owner or occupant thereof."

While extermination may not be effected, it seems possible to greatly lessen the numbers of the pest wherever systematic effort is made for their destruction. Even persistent removal of their nests is found not only to check their increase but to lead them to forsake favorite haunts.

AMONG the more important ornithological works in progress or projected may be mentioned the following as of special interest. As noticed in the present number of '*The Auk*' (p. 379), the fifteenth volume of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, by Dr. Sclater, devoted to the Tra-

cheophonine Passeres, has recently appeared. Volume XIII, by Mr. R. B. Sharpe, which includes the Ploceidæ, Sturnidæ, and the Pseudoscines, and completes the series of volumes on the Passeres (fifteen in number), has also just been issued. The Picariæ, it is expected, will occupy five volumes (Vol. XVI—XX), several of which are already in course of preparation. Mr. Salvin will treat the Hummingbirds, Swifts, and Goatsuckers; Mr. Hargitt will prepare the volume on the Woodpeckers; Mr. Sharpe will take the Anisodactylæ and Heterodactylæ, and Capt. Shelley the Zygodactylæ. Count Salvadori will prepare the volume on the Parrots.

Of monographs in course of publication mention may be made of Sharpe and Wyatt's Monograph of the Hirundinidæ, now approaching completion; Bartlett's Monograph of the Weaver-birds and Finches; Pelzeln and Madaráz's monograph of the Pipridæ or Manakins. Mr. Sharpe has in preparation a monograph of the Birds of Paradise, to be published by Sotheran & Co. of London. Mr. Seebold has in press 'The Birds of the Japanese Empire,' to be issued in one royal octavo volume, and is preparing a monograph of the Thrushes, with colored illustrations of all the species. Mr. Dresser, it is announced, is preparing a supplementary volume to his 'Birds of Europe.'

THE READERS OF 'The Auk' will be pleased to learn that Congress has appropriated \$25,000 for carrying on the work of the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy for the year beginning July 1, 1890, the appropriation being made specifically "for investigating the geographical distribution of animals and plants." In other words, the indefatigable Chief of the Division, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, may be congratulated on having at last realized his hope of establishing in effect a 'Biological Survey' of the United States. He has already five trained collectors in the field, and is himself at present in east central Idaho superintending the work of his assistants in this almost unexplored region.

During the past year he has established a serial publication under the title 'North American Fauna,' the first and second numbers of which are dated October, 1889, and the third, August, 1890. The first two relate entirely to mammals, the last contains two papers on birds and a general preliminary discussion of the life areas of North America, incidental to a special report on 'Results of a Biological Survey of the San Francisco Mountain Region and Desert of the Little Colorado in Arizona,' based on his explorations of last season. The 'North American Fauna' is intended to provide a medium of publication for the scientific results of the investigations of the Division, to consist of faunal papers and other technical matter of special interest to naturalists, while the more purely economic results will appear in bulletins and special reports. A fourth number of the 'Fauna,' we understand, is already in press.

MR. JONATHAN DWIGHT, JR., finding that he cannot devote his time to the proposed study of the genus Junco, (see AUK, Vol. VII, p. 219) desires that those who contemplated sending material for this purpose will withhold it until some future time.